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U. S. Department of Agriculture

THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Wednesday, November 25, 1936.

Hello folks. I trust every one of you are working up an appetite for a good thanksgiving dinner tomorrow, and incidentally I hope you have the wherewithall to prepare a good dinner. This morning I spent a little time in one of our leading retail markets here in Washington and from what I saw there I don't think any Washingtonians should go hungry tomorrow, or any day this winter for that matter. In that market there was displayed the choicest cuts of meats and a world of turkeys and other kinds of poultry. There were fruits and vegetables of pretty nearly every kind and from practically every part of the country and some from foreign countries. We formerly spoke of fruits or vegetables as being in season and out of season, but today it is just one long and continuous season for most of these fruits and vegetables on our large markets. With the opening of new localities for the growing of the various products together with improved methods of storage the seasons have been almost eliminated.

Every now and then something new in storage or production comes along. The keeping of fresh fruits and vegetables in a frozen condition is one of the most outstanding achievements of recent times and many of our garden and orchard products are now being grown at the height of the summer growing season and then frozen and kept frozen until we want them for use. With some products there is a slight loss of quality but with most of them the quality is maintained and in a few cases slightly improved.

Frequently there comes to light the story of some special achievement in gardening or fruit growing. I am not referring to the periodic reports that appear in newspapers and magazines relative to some magic method of producing vast quantities of foods, but to the good old method of combining soil, water, sunshine and elbow grease and the production of the finest fruits and vegetables according to nature's true and tried methods.

Only recently I read the story of two brothers, Minnesota boys, who have focused attention upon their achievement in growing 600,000 bunches of the finest celery on 20 acres of Minnesota muck lands. Their success has been based on good judgment and the application of natural principles of plant nutrition. These brothers have not spent a fortune in equipping their little 30 acre farm, 20 acres of which is under cultivation, but they have resorted to ingenuity and the use of inexpensive motorized equipment to see them through. For example water for irrigation is drawn from a roadside ditch by means of a centrifugal pump mounted on an old automobile chassis. The automobile engine operates the pump and moves the outfit as needed. The long line of pipe with small holes drilled in it is mounted on wheels so that it can be moved along the rows of celery

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and is connected to the pump by means of a section of fire hose. When the pump is running and delivering water at a pressure of 75 pounds to the square inch there is a heavy rain over the portion of the celery field reached by the pipe. It takes about 600 barrels of water to an acre at each watering and the plants are never allowed to suffer for water from the day they are set out until they are harvested during late July and August.

When it comes to marketing the celery about 25 men, mostly neighbors, are employed making it a sort of neighborhood enterprise. At other times the brothers help their neighbors by plowing their land with tractor plows and by the use of trucks for hauling. The celery crop from this little 30 acre farm is all moved to market by means of trucks, mostly those owned by dealers in the large cities who send their trucks long distances to secure a supply of the fine celery grown on this unique and well managed little farm.

I selected this little story today because it illustrates what can be accomplished by a well planned yet simple enterprise without frills or high cost for equipment. Competition is so keen now-a-days that any fruit or vegetable growing enterprise to succeed must be well planned and managed. Finding a satisfactory market is often the real problem but I have noticed that where a grower has something superior to sell the market usually comes right to his door.

As I have often remarked, there is one market that is seldom over-supplied and that is our dinner tables and so today when you either take your market basket and go to market or go to your own gardens, storage cellars and poultry yards for the things you want for your dinner tomorrow, just remember that back of it all there is a long, long story of painstaking effort and research to produce products of such fine quality and in such great variety. We owe much to those seedsmen and gardeners of our earlier days for the splendid things they have handed down to us but I think we owe more to our scientists of the present day who have so greatly improved our native and introduced fruits and vegetables. In closing my little talk today I want to wish you all a most pleasant thanksgiving with many home-comings and reunions of families and friends.

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